BASIC TECHNOLOGIES OF WITCHCRAFT

This is the outline for a collection of four semi-formal training sessions for people interested in starting out in "The Craft" or Neopaganism. It is
intended to give enough grounding to effectively participate in ritual, with the expectation that those that are really dedicated, skilled, and/or interested will undertake further study.
Since this is for beginners, there are no textbooks, no required reading, and the course only deals with such material as can be taught in four 1-1/2
to 2 hour informal sessions.

I. DAY ONE: Neopagan Traditions

The first day's material is a basic overview of Neopagan history and tradition, intended to make people more comfortable with the subject.

A. History of The Craft

Examine two topics to show how they influence the modern witch: how Neopagan witchcraft grew out of and borrows from the Gardnerian Reformation, and how our Craft Law developed from a variety of traditions and needs.

1. Origins, Ancient (?) and Modern

Fact before theory: discuss the evolution of witchcraft from Gardner onwards, then overview the evidences that witchcraft is a pre-Christian and (possibly) pre-historic religion.

a. The Gardnerian Reformation

Discussion of Gerald Gardner and both the original and modern versions of Gardnerian Witchcraft (with a quick side-line into its off-shoot and competitor, Alexandrian
Witchcraft).

b. The Church of All Worlds and Neopaganism

History of the Church of All Worlds and its contributions, including the word "neopagan" and "Green Egg", the journal in which the framework of modern, Neopagan witchcraft was developed from the framework of Gardnerianism crossed with Greco/Roman and Egyptian pagan traditions.

c. The Non-Pagan Branches of the Craft

Other types of witches: Feminist Wicca, Church of Wicca,

the Masonic Druids of England, and the Family Tradition-
alists.

d. Evidences of Stone-Age Witchcraft

Discuss some of the evidence that witchcraft carries on a tradition with stone-age origins and a 10,000 year history, both pro and con. Emphasize that there is no conclusive evidence one way or the other.

2. Craft Law, Ancient and Modern

a. The Reasons for Craft Law

Discuss how the in-bred fear of of the Powers of Evil, combined with the need to trust each other against the Inquisition, gave birth to the concept of Craft Law.

b. The Wiccan Rede

"An it harm none, do what thou will." Stress both the libertine and the disciplinarian interpretations of that
law. Discuss the Law of Karma, and how the Wiccan Rede (interpreted properly) becomes more of a safety rule than a Commandment.

c. The Rule of Secrecy

Gloss quickly over the Inquisition (everybody knows enough), and examine some of the evidence that a "witch-
hunt" is being begun. Encourage the students to recognize that the decision to be public or secretive has to be made by each individual, and they have the right to expect others to respect their privacy on this matter.

3. Magick in Theory and Practice

Magick is the unifying force in all of the Neopagan Traditions. To lay the groundwork for Day Two, explain the basic theories of magick, and how they influence the design and practice of Neopagan ritual.

a. The Basic Rules of Magick

Explain that the central theory of magick is that reality can be altered by a sufficiently strong will, focused by the proper ritual. For comparison and contrast, mention Bell's Hypothesis, from quantum physics. Discuss seriously the possibility that all that the magician alters is his own mind and awareness

of how the world works.

b. Magick and Neopagan Ritual

Define the two classic types of ritual: religious and magickal, or (better terms) theurgical and thauma-turgical. Show how magick is used in both, and where the rituals diverge.

B. The Magick Circle

Even more than the pentacle, the Magick Circle is the central symbol of Neopagan Witchcraft. The final topic for Day One is the purpose, symbolism, and protocols of a pagan Circle.

1. Purpose and Symbolism

a. Ceremonial Magic and Qabbalism versus the Pagan Circle

Most people get their idea of what a circle is for from the Ceremonial magicians and kaballists, who use it for protection from outside magick. Emphasize that the quantum leap that Gardner made was to think of using the circle INSTEAD to keep beneficial magick WITHIN the ritual area until it is fully built-up, focused, and directed.

b. The Power of the Circle: The Five Elements

Discuss how the classic Four Elements of Greek science are the symbols for four types of power, four states of matter, four types of personality, and so forth, showing correspondences. Highlight the difference between elemental power, psychic power, and divine power - and the similarities. Explain how the elements are used in casting the circle.

c. Ritual Tools

Discuss one-by-one the tools that a witch uses to focus her mind - the athame, the elemental symbols (salt or a pentacle for earth, a candle or lamp for fire, the incense and the wand for air, the chalice for water), the magic mirror, the sword, candles, herbs, and the use of images.

2. Conduct within the Circle

Two final bits of information needed inside the circle: the directions of casting and the integrity of the circle.

a. Widdershins and Deosil

Define the terms (deosil = clockwise, widdershins = counter-clockwise). Explain that widdershins is often mistaken for evil, but show that the difference is more accurately raising or bannishing power. Stress that, in order to get along, when in doubt, go deosil.

b. The Integrity of the Circle

Remind people that, since no evil magick is involved, there is no RISK involved in leaving a circle. However, stress that since a circle is supposed to CONTAIN energy it should not be punctured hastily or unnecessarily. Teach how to open and close gateways in the circle, and when to and not to do so.